

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BEXP, EEWT, CGEN, SCUL, BU

SUBJECT: BULGARIAN REQUEST TO OPEN COMMERCIAL OFFICES IN US

REF: A) SOFIA 1601 AUG 75; B) STATE 203524 AUG 75; C) SOFIA

2059; D) SOFIA 2811; E) SOFIA 138; F) SOFIA 163

1. I BELIEVE WE SHOULD NOW RE-EXAMINE THE BULGARIAN REQUEST TO OPEN COMMERCIAL OFFICES IN CHICAGO AND SAN FRANCISCO, A REQUEST THAT WAS ON THE WAY TO BEING GRANTED LAST SUMMER WHEN THE PUERTO RICO ISSUE SUPERVENED. SINCE THAT TIME WE HAVE HAD: (A) ZHIVKOV'S CONCILIATORY REMARKS TO THE DEPUTY SECRETARY INCLUDING THE VERY CAREFULLY PHRASED ONE ABOUT THE PUERTO RICO ISSUE; (B) FOREIGN MINISTER MLADENOV'S DETAILED AND CONSTRUCTIVE COMMENTS ON CSCE IMPLEMENTATION, ADDED TO THOSE OF ZHIVKOV; (C) FORTHCOMING BULGARIAN ATTITUDE IN OUR OPENING DISCUSSIONS ON THE CULTURAL-SCIENTIFIC AGREEMENT.

2. IN ADDITION, THERE IS A POSSIBLE HARBINGER OF CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION ON DIVIDED FAMILIES. AS REPORTED REF F, WHILE ONLY ONE SUCH CASE WAS SETTLED BETWEEN THE INGERSOLL VISIT AND THE END OF 1975, SINCE JANUARY 1 THREE EXIT PERMITS HAVE BEEN GRANTED -- INCLUDING ONE CASE IN WHICH THE SPONSOR IN THE US HAD LEFT BUL-
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GARIA ILLEGALLY. FOUR SWALLOWS DO NOT MAKE A SUMMER,

BUT IT DOES APPEAR THAT THERE IS NOW A GREATER WILLINGNESS TO MOVE ON DIVIDED FAMILIES, THOUGH NOT AS SWEEPINGLY AS ZHIVKOV HAD INDICATED LAST SEPTEMBER.

3. FOREGOING DE #

NS WITH THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND FOR A DECISION TO REOPEN THE QUESTION OF THE COMMERCIAL OFFICES; BUT THE DECISION ON THE OFFICES SHOULD BE MADE ON ITS OWN MERITS. FROM THE EXTREMELY LOW BASE OF \$10 MILLION IN 1973, TWO-WAY TRADE REACHED \$30 MILLION IN 1974 AND PROBABLY WAS OVER \$50 MILLION IN 1975. I HAVE THE IMPRESSION FROM RECENT CONVERSATION WITH LUKANOV (FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN TRADE) THAT THE GOB REMAINS VERY INTERESTED IN HAVING THESE OFFICES. THE BULGARIANS ARE LOOKING FOR WESTERN TECHNOLOGY IN A NUMBER OF FIELDS, AND MANY LARGE CONTRACTS ARE GOING TO EUROPEAN FIRMS BECAUSE OF ALREADY ESTABLISHED CONTACTS AND EASIER ACCESS. IN CHICAGO, GOB WOULD WANT THE OFFICE TO BE IN TOUCH WITH FIRMS INVOLVED IN MEAT PRODUCTION, GRAINS, METALS, THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY (GOB REGARDS NEW CONTACTS WITH GM AS QUITE PROMISING), FIRMS DEALING WITH AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY, AND OTHERS. IN SAN FRANCISCO, GOB WOULD BE IN BETTER POSITION TO DO BUSINESS WITH US FIRMS IN FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PROCESSING, MINERALS (KAISER), AND ELECTRONICS. NATURALLY, GOB WOULD ALSO USE THE OFFICES TO PUSH ITS EXPORTS TO US.

4. OF COURSE THE BULGARIANS WILL CONTINUE TO BE BOUND BY SOVIET RULES ON BLOC-VOTING IN THE UN. BUT I BELIEVE THE LESSON THAT THEIR BEHAVIOR ON MULTIGPTERAL ISSUES WILL AFFECT OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS HAS SUNK IN: ZHIVKOV TOLD DEPUTY SECRETARY INGERSOLL IN SEPTEMBER THAT WHEN THE GOB DELEGATE CANNOT DO WHAT WE WANT ON AN ISSUE SUCH AS PUERTO RICO, HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO TAKE A LOW POSTURE. AND WE SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THAT GRANTING THE GOB REQUEST WILL INCREASE THE BULGARIAN STAKE IN AT LEAST TOLERABLY GOOD RELATIONS WITH US, AS WOULD AN EXPANSION IN BULGARIAN EXPORTS TO THE US. HERZ

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